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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000872

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: WEST BANK TENSIONS RISE FOLLOWING PA AND IDF  
SECURITY ACTIONS

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Greg Marchese for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Two security incidents have increased tension in the West Bank. The IDF killed Hamas militant 'Abd al-Majid Dudin near Hebron on May 28. Also, in the early morning of May 31, three Palestinian Authority security forces (PASF) officers, two Hamas militants, and an unarmed Hamas-affiliated bystander died in a gun battle in the West Bank city of Qalqilya. PASF contacts said the May 31 operation was the culmination of a weeks-long operation targeting a senior Hamas militant in Qalqilya. In the wake of these events, Hamas has ratcheted up its rhetoric against the PA and reiterated earlier calls to "resist" the authority of the PA in the West Bank.

Six Dead in Qalqilya;  
One in Hebron  
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¶2. (C) PASF contacts report that a special joint task force closed in on Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades militants Mohammed 'Abd al-Fattah al-Samman and Mohammed Rashid Yasin at 2200 local on May 30, surrounding a house in the Kfar Saba neighborhood of Qalqilya. Security forces called in local leadership and family members in an attempt to broker a peaceful resolution to the standoff. Those attempts failed, and, at 0300 on May 31, a group of Preventive Security Organization (PSO) and National Security Forces (NSF) officers entered the house. NSF Commander Thiab Ali (Abu al-Fatah) told PolSpec on May 31 that the Hamas militants fired first, releasing a grenade that killed three PASF officers. Exchanges of gunfire resulted in the death of the Hamas militants, as well as 'Abd al-Nasir al-Basha, a suspected Hamas supporter and owner of the house in which the Qassam brigades members were taking refuge. The operation ended at 0600 local on May 31.

¶3. (U) Separately, a joint IDF and border police operation on May 28 resulted in the death of senior Hamas militant 'Abd al-Majid Dudin in Dura village, near Hebron.

Hamas Unleashes Barrage of Press Statements  
Accusing PASF of "Collaboration" with Israel  
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¶4. (U) Hamas militants in Gaza and Damascus released multiple press statements condemning the May 30-31 PA security operation, linking PASF actions to the Israeli occupation, and calling for "resistance" against the PA and its "security apparatuses." Gaza-based Hamas activist Mushir al-Masri told al-Jazirah television on May 31 that the Qalqilya operation was a "heinous crime" and alleged the operation had been planned to turn the two militants over to "the Zionist occupation forces" as a direct "result of the security coordination with the Zionist enemy." Al-Masri reiterated a previous Hamas position that West Bank Hamas

activists have free reign to retaliate against PASF and resist arrest.

¶5. (U) Following the May 28 Israeli operation in Hebron, Hamas sources speculated that PA intelligence coordination with Israel led to Dudin's death. An unattributed article in a Hamas-run daily newspaper called the PASF "Abbas' Dayton-supervised apparatuses," and accused the PA of supporting the "goals of the occupation."

¶6. (U) Hamas political figures, including Gaza-based Hamas PLC spokesman Salah al-Bardawil, have called for a suspension of the Cairo reconciliation talks. However, Damascus-based Musa Abu Marzuq was quoted as emphasizing Hamas' commitment to the dialogue in Cairo.

PA Stands Firm

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¶7. (SBU) PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) extended his condolences to the families of the three dead PASF officers, and said the PASF "will continue to carry out their patriotic duty and to guard the homeland and its citizens, and will strike down with an iron fist on all who dare tamper with our people's higher interests." PM Salam Fayyad met with security chiefs and Minister of Interior Abu Ali in Qalqilya on May 31. In a public statement, he called the incident "regrettable" but said he would not apologize for it.

Comment

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¶8. (C) Senior PA leadership views the Qalqilya operation as a qualified success and a demonstration of their resolve in conducting high risk counterterrorism operations. Hamas calls for "resistance" against the PA and their accusations of "collusion" with Israel are not new, but took on fresh urgency in the wake of these two incidents.

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